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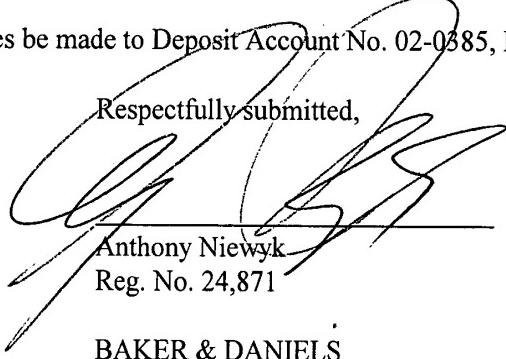
By the present Preliminary Amendment the claims have been revised delete the multiple dependency.

Care has been taken so as to avoid the addition of new matter in the claims.

Entry of the present Preliminary Amendment prior to the examination of the application is respectfully requested.

In the event applicants have overlooked the need for an extension of time, an additional extension of time, payment of fee, or additional payment of fee, applicants hereby petition therefor and authorize that any charges be made to Deposit Account No. 02-0385, Baker & Daniels.

Respectfully submitted,


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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Changes Made to Claims

Claim 1 remains unchanged.

Claim 2 remains unchanged.

Claim 3 remains unchanged.

Claim 4 has been amended as follows:

4. (Amended) Use as claimed in [any one of Claims 1 to 3] Claim 1, [characterised]
characterized in that the propionic bacteria belong to strains having properties of adhesion on the
colonocytes.

Claim 5 has been amended as follows:

5. (Amended) Use as claimed in [any one of Claims 1 to 4] Claim 1, [characterised]
characterized in that the composition consists of a dry or hydrated preparation presented in the form
of individual fractions of approximately 100 mg to 1 g, preferably from 200 to 500 mg, preferably
containing at least 10^8 cells.

Claim 6 has been amended as follows:

6. (Amended) Use as claimed in Claim 5, [characterised] characterized in that the
composition is presented in the form of gastroresistant capsules.

Claim 7 has been amended as follows:

7. (Amended) Use as claimed in [any one of Claims 1 to 6] Claim 1, [characterised]
characterized in that the composition consists of a formulated preparation, the propionic bacteria
being added to or associated with a fermentable substrate, notably dietary [fibres] fibers.

Claim 8 has been amended as follows:

8. (Amended) Use as claimed in [any one of Claims 1 to 6] Claim 1, [characterised]
characterized in that the composition consists of a formulated preparation, the propionic bacteria
being added to or incorporated into liquid, paste or solid foods.

Claim 9 has been amended as follows:

9. (Amended) Use as claimed in [any one of Claims 1 to 7] Claim 1, [characterised]
characterized in that the composition contains lactic bacteria and/or bifid bacteria.